SOUND TRANSIT

MOTION NO. M2000-44

A motion of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority directing staff to initiate and complete the "formal" environmental process under the State and National Environmental Policy Acts (SEPA and NEPA) for the Tukwila freeway route for the Central Link Light Rail line and providing further direction as related to the Central Link Light Rail alignment through the City of Tukwila.

Background:

On November 18, 1999, the Sound Transit Board adopted Resolution No. R99-34 identifying the alignment, stations, and maintenance base for the Central Link Light Rail project. The Board selected the Tukwila International Boulevard at-grade alignment (E1) in segment E through the City of Tukwila, which is one of the alternatives that was evaluated in the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project and is the route as described in Resolution No. R99-34. The project as described in Resolution No. R99-34 was transmitted to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the purpose of securing federal funding for the project.

The City of Tukwila has consistently supported the development of light rail serving the Tukwila Urban Center and the central Puget Sound region. However, the City of Tukwila has opposed the routing of light rail along International Boulevard from the beginning of the light rail planning process. In September 1999, the City of Tukwila identified a new option ("Tukwila freeway route") that the City of Tukwila prefers over the alignment through the City of Tukwila (E1) ultimately selected by the Sound Transit Board as the route was described in Resolution No. R99-34. The timing of identifying this new route, however, did not allow for it to be evaluated in the project's final EIS published in November 1999, upon which the FTA issued a Record of Decision on January 4, 2000. By Substitute Motion No. M99-85, the Sound Transit Board directed staff to evaluate the Tukwila freeway route at a level of detail consistent with the evaluation completed for the other segment E alternatives through the City of Tukwila presented to the Board in Resolution No. R99-34. Evaluation of the Tukwila freeway route was to include environmental analysis, conceptual engineering, constructability, cost and value engineering, financing, operations, ridership, and project scheduling.

Sound Transit staff has completed the evaluation and has determined that there are no fatal flaws to preclude proceeding with further study of the Tukwila freeway route. The "formal" environmental process for the Tukwila freeway route has not been initiated and likely will require preparation of a supplemental Environmental Impact Statement in concert with the FTA. The City of Tukwila has worked closely and cooperatively with Sound Transit to evaluate the new option.

Motion:

It is hereby moved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority that:

1. The proposed Tukwila freeway route appears to be feasible in terms of engineering, operational and environmental issues and merits further consideration.

2. Sound Transit staff will proceed immediately to initiate the "formal" environmental process and complete appropriate environmental review in compliance with the State and National Environmental Policy Acts (SEPA and NEPA) on the Tukwila freeway route.

3. If at any time Sound Transit identifies issues that could affect the feasibility of the Tukwila freeway route, Sound Transit will work with the City of Tukwila and the Board immediately to determine the appropriate course of action.

4. Sound Transit will establish a revenue account with the additional funds received from the State Legislature in the amount of approximately $3 million and will not commit these funds for any purpose until such time as the Sound Transit Board has made a decision on whether to replace the selected E1 route with the Tukwila freeway route.

5. All work on the selected E1 route will stop until a decision has been made on the Tukwila freeway route, except any work agreed to by both Sound Transit and the City of Tukwila.

6. Sound Transit will work with the appropriate local, state, and federal authorities to help ensure against loss of funds designated for improvements along Tukwila International Boulevard.

7. Sound Transit staff and consultants will work with the City of Tukwila staff and consultants as a joint team to find innovative ways of closing the gap between the selected E1 route and the Tukwila freeway route option.

8. Sound Transit, if requested by the City of Tukwila, will agree to extend the Voluntary Stay of Proceedings of the City of Tukwila's appeal of the Central Link Light Rail Final Environmental Impact Statement prior to its termination date as provided in said Voluntary Stay of Proceedings.

9. Sound Transit will work with the City of Tukwila to seek state and federal funds for the Tukwila freeway route option.

10. During the environmental process, Sound Transit staff will continue to provide regular status reports to the Sound Transit Board Executive Committee.

11. After the environmental review is complete, which is anticipated by January 2001, the results will be presented to the Sound Transit Board for consideration of whether to select the Tukwila freeway route option in place of the alignment selected in Resolution No. R99-34. If the Board decides to select the new option alignment (Tukwila freeway route), the Locally Preferred Alternative will be amended and Sound Transit staff will work with the Federal Transit Administration to revise the Record of Decision and gain other approvals as may be necessary.

Approved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof on the 25th day of May, 2000.

David D Earling

Dave Earling
Board Chair

ATTEST:

Marcia Walker

Marcia Walker
Board Administrator

STAFF REPORT

SOUND TRANSIT
MOTION NO. M2000-44

Authorization for "Formal" Environmental Review of Tukwila Freeway Route

Meeting:	Date:	Type of Action:	Staff Contact:	Phone:
Executive Committee	5/19	Discussion, Recommend Board Action	Paul Bay, Director Link Light Rail	206-398-5134
Board of Directors	5/25	Action		

PROPOSED ACTION

Directs staff to initiate and complete the "formal" environmental review of the City of Tukwila's proposed freeway route for the Central Link Light Rail line and providing further direction as related to the Central Link Light Rail alignment through the City of Tukwila.

KEY FEATURES

Highlights of Proposed Action:

- Directs staff to initiate and complete the "formal" environmental review for the City of Tukwila's proposed alternative route running through Tukwila.
- Commits Sound Transit to work with the City of Tukwila immediately if and when issues are identified which affect the feasibility of the Tukwila freeway route.
- Commits Sound Transit to provide regular status reports to the Executive Committee.
- Sound Transit commits to not use the $3 million additional funds received from the State Legislature for any purpose until a decision is made regarding the Tukwila freeway route.
- No work on the selected E1 route will proceed except as specifically agreed to by the City of Tukwila and Sound Transit.
- Sound Transit will work with the appropriate local, state, and federal authorities to help ensure against any loss of Transportation Improvement Board funds designated for improvements along Tukwila International Blvd.
- A joint team of Sound Transit and Tukwila staff and consultants will work together to find innovative ways of closing the funding gap between the selected E1 route and the Tukwila freeway route option.
- Sound Transit and the City of Tukwila will work together to obtain State and Federal funding for the Tukwila freeway route option.
- Sound Transit will grant an extension to the stay of Tukwila's SEPA appeal of the Central Link Light Rail Final Environmental Impact Statement upon the request of Tukwila.

Discussion of Proposed Action:

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This Board motion authorizes initiation and completion of the "formal" environmental review for the Tukwila freeway route option and provides further direction as related to the proposed Central Link Light Rail alignment through the City of Tukwila.

BUDGET

Funding for this scope of work is included in Sound Move and in the FY2000 adopted capital budget. The budget for completion of these tasks is identified in Sound Transit's adopted 2000 budget under preliminary engineering. With the budget developed for the Central Link configuration as adopted by the Board on November 18, 1999, there is sufficient funding to complete the remaining work.

Funding for preparation of environmental review, assuming a draft supplemental EIS, is funded from unused contingency remaining in the existing environmental services contract with Parametrix, Inc. ($275,000). If the work on the draft supplemental EIS exceeds $275,000, then the Parametrix, Inc. contract budget will need to be amended to fund the final supplemental EIS for an estimated total of $137,500 ($125,000 plus a 10% contingency).

ALTERNATIVES

Choose to decide that no further work will be performed on the Tukwila freeway route.

CONSEQUENCES OF DELAY

The City of Tukwila wishes to proceed with the rebuilding of Tukwila International Blvd. in 2001, but cannot complete this work until the Sound Transit Board makes a determination of the alignment. Without completion of the "formal" environmental review process, the Board cannot take action to choose the Tukwila freeway route as the new locally preferred alternative for the Tukwila segment. Completion of the environmental process and Board action to determine the alignment are thus desired at the earliest possible time by the City of Tukwila.

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION

Sound Transit has worked cooperatively with the City of Tukwila, Washington State Department of Transportation, and King County Metro to study this option.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Sound Transit has solicited opinions and comments from the public in a variety of ways. An open house was held on March 22, 2000, that was attended by over 150 people. Sound Transit staff gave presentations to a number of community groups including the Highway 99 Task Force, the Southwest King County Chamber of Commerce Tukwila Government Affairs Committee, and the Tukwila Rotary Club. Letters and comments have been received via mail, e-mail, and telephone.

LEGAL REVIEW

MBL 5/10/00.